

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 181239 TOSEC 190019

46

ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011

DRAFTED BY S/S:PSBRIDGES:AL

APPROVED BY S/S:PSBRIDGES

----- 104041

Z 221322Z JUL 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY FLASH

S E C R E T STATE 181239 TOSEC 190019

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEATS BEIRUT 6506 ACTION SECSTATE INFO CAIRO
DAMASCUS JIDDA 22 JUL 76

QUOTE S E C R E T BEIRUT 6506

EXDIS

(DEPT TREAT AS NODIS)

DEPT PASS USDEL SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AEMR, US, LE

SUBJECT: BEIRUT EVACUATION

REF: (A) STATE 180858, (B) BEIRUT 6497

1. AFTER OVERNIGHT REFLECTION I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT PLO
POSTPONEMENT OF OUR LAND CONVOY IS ESSENTIALLY POLITICALLY MOTIVATED.
THERE ARE NUMBER OF FACTORS WHICH MAY BE BEHIND THE PLO DECISION, AS
FOLLOWS:

(A) IN VIEW OF PERSISTENT BELIEF IN MANY QUARTERS THAT THERE IS A
SYRIAN-MMARONITE-ISRAELI-U.S. PLAN TO ATTACK BEIRUT, PLO MAY HAVE
DECIDED THAT, IF THIS IS INDEED TRUE, HOLDING OUR CONVOY WOULD SERVE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 181239 TOSEC 190019

PURPOSE OF DELAYING OR FORCING CANCELLATION OF THIS ATTACK. IF "PLOT"

IS MERELY A CANARD, ON OTHER HAND, PLO ACTION WOULD AT LEAST ALLEVIATE POPULAR APPREHENSIONS IN WEST BEIRUT CONCERNING ITS PROSPECT.

WHILE SOME MEMBERS OF THE PLO LEADERSHIP MAY WELL GIVE CREDENCE TO THIS "PLOT," I BELIEVE THAT MORE ASTUTE TOP LEADERSHIP PROBABLY DOES NOT RPT NOT. PRESUMABLY THE LATTER IS NEVERTHELESS CONCERNED BY THE DESTABILIZING EFFECT IN WEST BEIRUT OF COMBINATION OF POPULAR ANTICIPATION OF AN ATTACK PLUS UMS. EVACUATION EFFORT.

(B) ANOTHER ELEMENT IN PLO THINKING MAY BE FEELING LF PLO LEADERS THAT BY WITOHOLDING PERMISSION FOR THE CONVOY, THEY MIGHT SOMEHOW BE PUTTING PRESSURE ON SYRIANS THROUGH US WITH REGARD TO UPCOMING PALESTINIAN-SYRIAN DIALOGUE. FACT THAT ABU JAAFER STRESSED ASSAD'S SPEECH IN HIS TALK WITH RSO, AND REFERRED TO UPCOMING PLO-SYRIAN TALKS, SUGGESTS THAT SOMEHOW PLO MAY FEEL THAT HOLDING OUR CONVOY "HOSTAGE" COULD WORK TO PLO'S ADVANTAGE IN THIS REGARD.

(C) EVEN IF PLO LEADERS ARE NOT RPT NOT NONCERNED RE POSSIBLE IMMINENT ATTACK ON WEST BEIRUT, THEY PROBABLY DO NOT LIKE IDEA AT THIS POINT OF A MAJOR EVACUATION FROM BEIRUT. WE UNDERSTAND ARAFAT IS FURIOUS THAT 900 PALESTINIANS DEPARTED FROM SIDON RECENTLY, AND HE MAY HAVE BEEN TAKEN ABACKKBY A FIGURE OF 400-PLUS LEAVING IN OUR CONVOY. THIS COULD PERHAPS BE TAKEN AS REFLECTING POORLY ON PLO'S ABILITY TO MAINTAIN ORDER AND STABILITY IN WEST BEIRUT, BUT, MORE IMPORTANT, IT DIMINISHES THE HOSTAGE POTENTIAL OF A FOREIGN PRESENCE IN WEST BEIRUT IN EVENT OF AN ATTACK.

3. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT, IN ADDITION TO FOREGOING POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, PLO CONTINUES TO HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT A ROAD CONVOY. WHILE ABU JAAFER HAS NEVER OBJECTED TO THIS FORM OF EVACUATION, WE KNOW THAT FAROUK QADDOUMI TOLD EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR LAST WEEK THAT SEA EVACUATION WOULD BE PREFERABLE, AND WE RECALL THAT PLO OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD SAUDIS SAME THING. SECURITY FOR SEA OR AIR EVACUATION IS PROBABLY SIMPLER, OR AT LEAST SPANS A MMUCH SHORTER PERIOD OF TIME. IF INDEED THIS IS A CONSIDERATION IN PLO THINKING, IT MIGHT HAVE STRENGTHENED ARAFAT'S HAND IN MAKING POLITICAL DECISION TO POSTPONE CONVOY.

4. I BELIEVE THAT PLO IS UNLIKELY TO POSTPONE CONVOY'S DEPARTURE INDEFINITELY, UNLESS IT CAN MAKE MORE EFFECTIVE SECURITY CASE. I APPRECIATE DEPT'S JUDGEMENT THAT PLO MUST KNOW THAT FURTHER
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 181239 TOSEC 190019

DOWN THE ROAD IT IS GONG TO NEED USG SUPPORT WITH REGARD TO PALESTINIAN PLACE IN ANY PEACE SETTLEMENT. HOWEVER, IT IS MY VIEW THAT THIS CONSIDERATION IS NOT RPT NOT UPPERMOST IN PLO MINDS AT THIS JUNCTURE. I DON'T THINK IT IS IN BACK OF MINDS OF PLO LEADERS RIGHT NOW. FOR MOMENT PLO IS CONCERNED WITH ITS IMMEDIATE SURVIVAL, WHICH COULD TO LARGE EXTENT BE AFFECTED BY WHAT COMES OUT OF PLO'S TALKS WITH SYRIA. IF PLO INTERPRETS SYRIANS' OFFER AS SUPPRESSION OF PLO MOVEMENT, PLO WILL NOT BE MUCH COMFORTED

BY KNOWLEDGE THAT SOME DAY U.S., THROUGH ITS INFLUENCE WITH ISRAEL,
MIGHT GET THEM A PIECE OF THE CAKE.

5. IN LIGHT OF FOREGOING, I PROPOSE THAT I BE AUTHORIZED IMMEDIATELY
TO TAKE FOLLOWING ACTION:

ISSUE A PUBLIC STATEMENT REITERATING OUR POSITION ON LEBANON
AND THE PALESTINIANS, WITHOUT, HOWEVER, REFERRING TO THE "PLOT."
I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE VERY USEFUL IN
CLEARING THE AIR FOR OUR EVACUATION
AND IN OVERCOMING LINGERING SUSPICIONS OF WHAT WE ARE UP TO IF
EMBASSY COULD MAKE FOLLOWING STATEMENT:
BEGIN TEXT: IN VIEW OF CERTAIN MISUNDERSTANDINGS WHICH
HAVE ARISEN IN THE PAST WEEK IN THE PRESS AND ELSEWHERE, THE AMERICAN
EMBASSY WISHES TO REITERATE UNITED STATES POLICY CONCERNING LEBANON.
AS HAS BEEN STATED REPEATEDLY, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS
TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE PARTITION OF LEBANON AND STRONGLY SUPPORTS A
UNITED LEBANON WHOSE NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY
ARE FULLY RESPECTED.

THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WISHES TO SEE AN END TO THE
TRAGIC FIGHTING AND A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE PARTIES. IT WELCOMES
ALL CONSTRUCTIVE EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS AND STANDS READY TO
HELP IN ANY WAY IT CAN.

WITH RESPECT TO THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION, AS HAS BEEN STATED
ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT
A MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE LEGITIMATE
INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIANS. END TEXT.

6. GIVEN OUR CURRENT PROBLEMS WITH THE PLO, I THINK A RESTATEMENT
AT THIS TIME OF OUR TRADITIONAL POSITION ON PALESTINIAN INTERESTS IS
HIGHLY DESIRABLE. WHILE OF COURSE IT DOES NOT GO AS FAR AS PALESTINIANS

WOULD LIKE, IT WOULD HELP DISABUSE THE MANY PALESTINIANS HERE OF
THE IDEA THAT WE SUPPORT EFFORTS TO SUPPRESS THE PALESTINIAN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 181239 TOSEC 190019

MOVEMENT AND ARE IGNORING THE PALESTINIANS IN THE CONTEXT OF A
MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT.

7. I HAVE DISCUSSED MY ANALYSIS OF PLO ACTIONS, AS WELL AS
INITIATIVES I PROPOSE FOR DEPARTMENT'S CONSIDERATION (PARA SIX
ABOVE), WITH BRITISH AMBASSADOR PETER WAKEFIELD. HE CONCURS
COMPLETELY WITH MY ANALYSIS AND ALSO CONCURS IN ADVISABILITY OF
THESE INITIATIVES. TODAY HIS CONSULAR OFFICER HAS AN APPOINTMENT
WITH ABU JAAFER ON ANOTHER MATTER, AND WE AGREED THAT CONSULAR
OFFICER SHOULD RAISE MATTER OF CONVOY. I URGED THAT CONSULAR
OFFICER REFER TO NUMBER OF BRITISH CITIZENS IN CONVOY AND EXPRESS
BRITISH CONCERN THAT THEY NOT BE NOT ENABLED TO DEPART PROMPTLY.

8. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS: BRITISH AMBASSADOR HAS JUST
INFORMED MTLMF RESULT OF HIS CONSULAR OFFICER'S VISIT WITH ABU

JAAFER. IN REPLYING TO CONSULAR OFFICER'S INQUIRY CONCERNING POSTPONEMENT OF CONVOY, ABU JAAFER EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT BRITISH INTEREST. CONSULAR OFFICER TOLD HIM THAT NUMBER OF BRITISH CITIZENS ARE INVOLVED AND THEY ARE ANXIOUS TO GET OUT. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION, ABU JAAFER ALLUDED TO PRINCE FAHD'S CALL TO ARAFAT, WHICH LED TO CONVOY'S POSTPONEMENT. ABU JAAFER GAVE IMPRESSION THAT ARAFAT WAS IRKED AT SAUDI INTERVENTION AND WANTED TO DEMONSTRATE BY HIS ACTION PLO'S INDEPENDENCE. FURTHERMORE, HE CLAIMED THAT PLO IS ALSO UNHAPPY WITH NEGATIVE USG REACTION TO POSTPONEMENT, EVIDENTLY HAVING GOTTEN IMPRESSION THAT PLO BEING SOMEHOW THREATENED. THUS, BRITISH CONSULAR OFFICER FELT THAT WHILE POLITICAL FACTORS ALLUDED TO ABOVE NO DOUBT CONTRIBUTED TO POSTPONEMENT DECISION, SAUDI INTERVENTION AND OUR RESPONSE TO POSTPONEMENT ACTION WERE FURTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTORS.

9. COMMENT: ASSUMING BRITISH CONSULAR OFFICER IMPRESSIONS ARE CORRECT, IT WOULD SEEM ADVISABLE FOR US TO EASE PRESSURES WE ARE NOW PLACING ON PLO HERE, IN CAIRO AND IN JIDDA, AND LET THEM SETTLE A BIT. IF WE SIT BACK WE MIGHT WELL GET PLO-INITIATED APPROVAL FOR EVACUATION EARLY NEXT WEEK. INCIDENTALLY, BRITISH CONSULAR OFFICER GAVE IMPRESSION THAT PLO DOES NOT REPORT NOT HAVE ANY OBJECTION TO LAND CONVOY AND INDEED MAY PREFER IT TO SEA EVACUATION.

SEELYE

UNQUOTE ROBINSON

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EMERGENCY EVACUATION, CITIZEN PROTECTION, POLITICAL STABILITY, TOSEC, CAT-A, PROGRESS REPORTS, HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE181239
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: PSBRIDGES:AL
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: N760004-0773
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760731/aaaabbic.tel
Line Count: 193
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 76 STATE 180858, 76 BEIRUT 6497
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <18 OCT 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: LOCK1
Status: <DBA CHANGED> MCM 20040603
Subject: BEIRUT EVACUATION
TAGS: PFOR, AEMR, US, LE, SY, PLO, (ARAFAT, YASSER)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006